

Marking A Milestone

Highlighting a long-term commitment to improving health care services for North Carolina communities and citizens

A Milestone in Arthritis Care Alvin Daughtridge



Alvin Daughtridge always held the philosophy that businesses and communities flourish if relationships are built on integrity, cooperation, and trust. According to Daughtridge, "When people park their ego at the door and engage in face-to-face dialogue, problems frequently become opportunities and win-win solutions emerge." In 1999, while serving on the boards of both the Thurston Arthritis Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and Caldwell Memorial Hospital in Lenoir, North Carolina, the vice president of Fairfield Chair Company and life-long community advocate saw an opportunity to put his philosophy into action.

Recognizing the need for Caldwell Memorial to add more specialists at the same time the Arthritis Center was looking for opportunities to expand its outreach efforts across the state, Daughtridge immediately began work to build just such a win-win partnership between the two entities. He knew, however, that opportunity does not always result in success. The newly formed partnership would need to show a strong return on investment in order to succeed and thrive in the long term. To help accomplish that, Daughtridge worked closely with Thurston and Caldwell Memorial to ensure arthritis care would be provided in the area and that the area primary care physicians would offer referrals.

His efforts paid off. In 2001, a new clinic opened its doors and was named the Alvin W. Daughtridge Arthritis Clinic in honor of his vision. Dr John Winfield, retired founding director of Thurston Arthritis Research Center and rheumatologist at the clinic, says, "Alvin was instrumental to bringing arthritis care to Caldwell County and has continued to be a staunch supporter of arthritis research. Alvin has been active in arthritis care and research for many years and the dedication of the arthritis clinic in his name was a much deserved tribute to his efforts." The clinic quickly grew from a 1 to 2 day a month operation to 3 days a week. It also expanded from clinical care to a site location for drug studies and grand rounds.

"I can personally attest that Alvin's efforts have resulted in greater access to improved arthritis care for Caldwell County residents," says Dr Winfield. Daughtridge, a man well-known for his gentle and humble nature, is quick to deflect the credit and offers his own praise of Dr Winfield. "John's effectiveness with his patients is outstanding," he says. "He has made a marvelous difference in the lives of arthritis patients here in Caldwell County."

Throughout his life, Daughtridge has been a tireless community volunteer and advocate in multiple areas including health, business, and education. He has served on the boards of Caldwell County's Cancer Society, Red Cross, and Board of Health and as chairman of the Caldwell County Blood Mobile. He is a former president of the Lenoir/Caldwell Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Lenoir Jaycees, the American Furniture Manufacturer's Association, and the Furniture Shippers Association. A former Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute board member, he has served on the Caldwell Schools Career Center Advisory Council and the Planning Team. Founding chair of Communities in Schools of Caldwell County, other educational endeavors include work with the King Creek Parent Teacher Association, Communities in Smart Start Program, Children's Advocacy Council, and Preschool Interagency Council. Additional civic activities include Caldwell County's United Way, Planning Board, and City/County Services Committee, and the Lenoir Recreation Commission. A member of the Caldwell Baptist Association, Daughtridge is a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Lenoir First Baptist Church.

Daughtridge has described the clinic as a "godsend" to the people of Caldwell County. He was perhaps most pleased, however, to see his philosophy of win-win relationships between business and community come to fruition. "Because of the clinic, more people in North Carolina became aware of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and its arthritis expertise through the Thurston Arthritis Research Center," he said. Dr Joanne Jordan, director of Thurston and chief of the Division of Rheumatology, Allergy, and Immunology at the UNC School of Medicine, says, "Every member of the Thurston staff works to ensure better arthritis care and improved outcomes for the people of North Carolina. We thank community advocates like Alvin Daughtridge who make such efforts possible."

Contributions from Randall Mounce, Thurston Arthritis Research Center, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.